



# GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

MAY 2013 VOLUME 4 ISSUE 5

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## Do you speak in guns?



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

As Congress struggles to pass any meaningful gun safety legislation, it might behoove us to ask why, on the heels of a decade of mass shootings, this is so difficult. While the obvious answer might be the lobbying effectiveness of the National Rifle Association (NRA), there is still the question of what underlies the NRA's power. Why does it have such a large and passionately devoted member base, willing to donate large sums of money to its cause and turn out to vote based on this single issue?

One possibility is that guns are so deeply engrained in American identity

that any pejorative suggestion about firearms is taken as a personal attack. If that seems far-fetched, think back to your early education about the Revolutionary War and the image it conjures. For me, it is ragtag colonists with rifles peeking from behind trees picking off the neatly lined-up rows of wig-topped British soldiers. Picture the settlement of the United States, from Plymouth Rock to California. My Thanksgiving image features a Pilgrim in a black and white suit with a wide belt taking aim at a wild turkey to serve at dinner. Wild West television shows like The Lone Ranger were pervasive during baby boomers' formative years, as were cowboy movies such as High Noon, where a would-be pacifist reclaims his gun to defend his town and his pacifist wife shoots the man trying to kill her husband. We grew up playing cowboys capturing hapless Indians who had only their bows and arrows and hatchets to defend themselves.

If this seems like ancient history, consider how frequently we use gun-related metaphors as superlatives in everyday speech. Wouldn't you like to be a "Big Shot"? We search for a "silver bullet" to solve our problems. That stand-up guy you know, he's a real

"straight-shooter." That sharp woman, she's "quick on the draw." Do you have some important facts to highlight? Use "bullet points." (See this month's crossword for more examples of gun-related metaphors.)

When automobiles supplanted horses as the dominant form of transportation, they too had sacred cow status. There were tremendous fights about requiring safety features like seat belts and restricting the right to drive after consuming alcohol. Looking back, it seems hard to believe that people felt so strongly that their freedom would be threatened by the introduction of these public safety measures. Citizen's groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) conducted massive public education measures, shared their personal pain at losing loved ones to irresponsible drivers, and changed the calculus for most Americans.

Someday, people will wonder that such vehement objections were raised to doing a background check before selling firearms and declining to sell them to people with a history of violence. They will shake their heads in amazement at the resistance to public funding of mental health treatment

for those prone to violence against themselves or others. Mothers will see that it is so.

In the wake of the killings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, mothers have again banded together to create change. Moms Demand Action For Gun Sense in America was founded to demand action **now** to:

- 1) Ban assault weapons and ammunition magazines that hold more than 10 rounds.
- 2) Require background checks for all gun and ammunition purchases.
- 3) Report the sale of large quantities of ammunition to the ATF, and ban online sales of ammunition.
- 4) Make gun trafficking a federal crime with serious criminal penalties.
- 5) Counter gun industry lobbyists' efforts to weaken gun laws at the state level.

As Moms Demand Action make the pain of loss real to those of us lucky enough to have thus far escaped the shooting of someone we care for, I resolve to be conscious of my figures of speech and work towards removing those phrases that glorify guns. I just hope I don't shoot myself in the foot!



**Bethlehem United Church of Christ**  
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(between William and Packard)  
[www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org) (734) 665-6149  
Bethlehem Church is home for the Groundcover Office

### Sundays:

8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship  
10:00 am ~ Church School

### Upcoming Events:

May 15 ~ 7:30 PM piano/violin concert

May 24 ~ Parking Lot Pretzel Sale

Noon: \$5.00/6 pretzels or \$10.00/12 pretzels

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy

## A habit of pulling back



by Rev. Dr. Martha  
Brunell

You may or may not know that I have moved since writing my last Groundcover News column. My new home is in Sycamore, IL with the Mayfield Congregational United Church of Christ. One of the things that happened at Bethlehem not long before I left was that I had a picture taken with a professional photographer. The photographer, Wendy, was very good and reassuring. I am one of those people who does not like to be in front of a camera.

It was a cool day in late March, and the light was excellent for pictures. Most of the pictures were taken outside. When we were both in position, against a beautiful stone wall at Bethlehem and Wendy raised her camera for the first time, the following piece of dialogue occurred:

Wendy: Don't pull back. Tilt your body toward the camera.

Martha: I guess that tells you how much I enjoy having my picture taken. My daughters are both naturals in front of the camera. Not me!

Wendy: No, that is not it. You instinctively pull back when face-to-face because of what you do. You spend lots and lots of time listening to people. Without thinking about it, you make space for that listening. Now, tilt a little closer toward me.

I was grateful for how Wendy quickly reframed my description of what I thought I wasn't doing just right. I was fascinated by her perspective on my pulling back. What she observed suggested good questions for me.

How is it that we open sufficient safe and welcoming space for ourselves and others to speak, to share, to be vulnerable, and to contribute? How do we position ourselves to listen and to receive with careful attention? Years ago, my friend Steve taught me that in a broad sense and in a host of different situations, listening is the sturdy core of what it means to be a loving person.

Each month and with every paper sold, Groundcover News has the potential to provide the give and take of such a listening space. Various people find their voices. Clear opinions are expressed. Learning occurs among us. Different viewpoints and maybe even disagreements are held together in the space of the paper. We get to know diverse others through what is written, what people are seeing and hearing, and what is important to them. Those others are a growing circle gathered around issues of home, community, safety, and security. Both our expression and our listening serve the paper and one another well.

I am pleased indeed to be able to continue to write for the paper as a columnist from afar. Regularly setting forth what I am thinking or wondering about is a joy for me. Early in the month I look forward to opening up the new issue to consider the material everyone else has written. One of my most tender moments at Bethlehem occurred when the paper was quite young. A church office volunteer in her late 80s was reading each and every word of the paper. As she turned the page, she looked up at me and told me in no uncertain terms all that she was gleaned from that particular paper. To watch the wide wonder of her listening and learning was a holy moment. In her spirit, we can choose to pull back, leave space, and invite others known and unknown to join the ongoing stream of what we have to say and hear.

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## May Calendar of Events

**May 5 – 2013 Water Hill Music Fest,** 2-6 p.m. Stroll through the Water Hill neighborhood (bounded by Miller Ave., Brooks St., Sunset Rd., and the Ann Arbor Railroad tracks) to hear dozens of households offering free performances on their own porches. More info, visit [www.waterhill.org](http://www.waterhill.org).

**May 7/14/21/28 – Tuesday Résumé Clinics,** 9-11 a.m. Learn how to construct a résumé and receive professional advice and editing. Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Career Transition Center, Key Bank Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 301 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: call (734) 544-6799; TDD (800) 649-3777.

**May 8 – Public Meeting: Washtenaw Eviction & Foreclosure Defense,** 7-8 p.m. Washtenaw County residents seeking support for personal housing justice problems (usually with landlords, banks, or taxes), as well as housing activists, are invited to discuss case-specific referrals and learn about support options. First Congregational United Church of Christ, 218 N. Adams St., Ypsilanti. More info: (734) 707-1933, [washtenawforeclosures@gmail.com](mailto:washtenawforeclosures@gmail.com).

**May 10 – Ypsilanti Community Potluck & Sustainability Film Series,** 6 p.m. Ypsilanti District Library, in cooperation with Growing Hope, the Ypsi Food Co-op, and Transition Ypsilanti, hosts a community potluck followed by a screening of the documentary "Urban Roots," which follows the urban farming phenomenon in Detroit. Expert-led discussion to follow. Ypsilanti District Library, 229 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: (734) 482-4110, [www.ypsilibrary.org/content/sustainability-film-series-5](http://www.ypsilibrary.org/content/sustainability-film-series-5).

**May 10/19 – Growing Hope Spring Plant Sale,** 2-8 p.m. (5/10) 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. (5/19). Get all your garden supplies, including seedlings, edible container gardens, raised bed and season extension kits, soil, compost, and more. Proceeds support Growing Hope's work to increase healthy food access in Ypsilanti and surrounding communities. Growing Hope Center, 922 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: (734) 786-8401, [www.growinghope.net](http://www.growinghope.net).

**May 11 – Community Conversation: "Interrupting Racism: Practicing the Skills of Creative Intervention,"** 1-4 p.m. A concluding event to the U-M Theme Semester on Understanding Race, this community conversation facilitated by anti-oppression educators Shayla R. Griffin and Melanie S. Morrison explores positive approaches to confronting racially offensive or oppressive words, actions and policies. RSVP encouraged but not required. Zing Train, 3728 Plaza Dr., Ann Arbor. RSVP to [sablanks@umich.edu](mailto:sablanks@umich.edu).

**May 11 – Project Grow Heirloom Plant Sale,** 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Populate your food garden this year with hard-to-find heirloom varieties, including 60 tomato and 20 pepper varieties. People's Food Co-op, 216 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ann Arbor.

2013 Catalog and more event info: [projectgrowgardens.org](http://projectgrowgardens.org).

**May 15 – Chamber Music Concert,** 7:30 p.m. Celebrated piano/violin duo Gail and Andrew Jennings play a free concert featuring music of Beethoven, Charles Ives, and others. Optional contributions help raise funds for the church's choir room renovations and new piano. Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 423 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ann Arbor. More info: Dr. Geoff Stanton, (734) 996-5508.

**May 16-17 – Conference: "Evolution of Cooperation and the Framing of Peace,"** 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. A concluding event to the U-M Theme Semester on Understanding Race, this conference in honor of noted peace scholar Robert Axelrod highlights aspects of Dr. Axelrod's influential research agenda on peace negotiation. Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, 735 S. State St., Ann Arbor. More info: [www.lsa.umich.edu/themesemester](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/themesemester).

**May 17-18 – "24-Hour Peace Generator" World-Healing Peace Circle,** 6 p.m. Fri - 6 p.m. Sat. Join others from all walks of life in silent prayer or focused meditation toward peace, understanding, joy, and healing for your family, the world, and yourself. Drop in anytime. Refreshments provided. Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, 704 Airport Blvd., Ann Arbor. More info: [www.peacegenerator.org](http://www.peacegenerator.org), or email [info@peacegenerator.org](mailto:info@peacegenerator.org).

**May 18 – Ypsilanti PRIDE Day 2013,** 9 a.m. - noon. Community-wide event intended to foster community pride and encourage local business growth by creating a clean and welcoming environment. 500-1,200 volunteers will spend the morning picking up litter, painting, planting, and otherwise beautifying the Ypsilanti community. Lunch and entertainment to follow. 1015 N. Congress St., Ypsilanti. Register as a volunteer, make project suggestions and get more event info at: [www.a2ychamber.org/Events/Ypsilanti-Pride.aspx](http://www.a2ychamber.org/Events/Ypsilanti-Pride.aspx).

**May 18 – 2013 Ann Arbor Juggling Arts Festival,** 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Participate in free juggling classes or just watch local juggling artists work their magic. Wide World Sports Center, 2140 Oak Valley Dr., Ann Arbor. More info: (734) 913-4625, [www.umich.edu/~juggle/festival](http://www.umich.edu/~juggle/festival).

**May 28 – "Take a Chance Tuesday": live & free music at The Ark,** 7:30-10 p.m. Food Gatherers benefit concert featuring folk group Mike Vial and the Great Lake Effect. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. Free; donations of nonperishable food items accepted. More info: [www.theark.org](http://www.theark.org), or call (734) 761-1451.

**June 2 – Taste of Ann Arbor,** 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Annual community event featuring local restaurants offering visitors bite-size tastes of what they do best. Taste tickets cost \$0.50 each. Main and Liberty, Ann Arbor. More info: [mainstreetannarbor.org](http://mainstreetannarbor.org).

## GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

*Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.*

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## Pizza not in the park



by Shelley DeNeve  
Groundcover  
Vendor

Thank you for purchasing the May issue of Groundcover News, and thank you for all the times you have purchased GCN in the past. We certainly hope you get a great feeling when reading Groundcover and become informed about things that you didn't know but always wondered about.

You might be wondering about the location of Pizza in the Park (PITP) being changed from downtown in Liberty Park Plaza to its Spring location in the parking lot of the Ann Arbor Community Center. The Vineyard Homeless Ministry has been serving the low-income community on Friday nights in this location for nearly seven years. I look forward to the pizza, an improvised mocha of hot chocolate in my coffee, the goodie bag of snacks to tide me through the weekend, and an opportunity to socialize with other Groundcover folks and the volunteers. It is also where I replenish my supply of papers that I will sell throughout the weekend.

When I first heard about this change, about three weeks back, my initial feeling was “Uh-oh.” I felt I was going to hear a lot of flack about this from the patrons of PITP. This initial feeling prompted me to think about an article to write for the paper. My curiosity got the best of me when the question, “I wonder how the patrons will feel about this move,” kept lurking in my mind. So, on the last two Fridays before the move, I asked about 25 PITP attendees their opinion of the move.

Much to my amazement, for the most part, everyone seemed to have a positive outlook on the move though a few folks said it didn't make a difference to them. I would like to share some of things said:

*It's not a bad move, just as long as they don't cut it out completely.*

*It's a good move because it's closer to my home.*

*I'm not against the move, but why?*

*It's a good idea because I don't like people staring at me just because I'm in a position to partake in Pizza in the Park as a patron.*

*It's starting to get warm out so it will be OK.*

As we all know, where there is positive



The location of the weekend ministry, through the end of May, is now the parking lot of the Ann Arbor Community Center. It is stark but does make setup and distribution easier.

there may be some negative. Some of the not-so-happy-about-the-move things said were as follows:

*I'm not happy about how far I have to go.*

*It's not as convenient.*

*There is no seating in the new location.*

A few people expressed a concern for an unsaid truth: that the real reason for the move was to remove the homeless from the general public eye, maybe because of some of the bad behavior that has taken place at times in the park or just the image that homelessness portrays.

On Friday, April 19, the first day at the new venue, around 25-40 of the usual patrons showed up, far fewer than the normal 80-120. As I left work, another question circulated my brain. I wanted to know how everyone got to the new venue. I had the time to go to PITP (maybe it should now be called PITL – Pizza in the Lot), but wasn't sure if I would be able to go because I don't have a vehicle. However, my son, who owns a vehicle, loaned it to me. I helped a fellow Groundcover vendor out by giving him a ride to the new location.

On this day, it was cold, cloudy, damp, windy and sometimes rainy. Most people who showed up had walked to the new location. Call it dedication, habit or desperation, but they got there. Despite the weather, things went smoothly and even more orderly than usual. There was a lot of room for people to move around and socialize, though there was no seating or tables for putting down a cup or plate. Maybe that will come, some day. It is too early to tell how things will work out, but I have a good feeling they will eventually work out well. Vineyard Homeless Ministry has a long history of making sure they do.

the other volunteers, fostering a better environment for fellowship. We are grateful to the Ann Arbor Community Center for offering this space and we look forward to many more Friday evenings in our new location.”

Pizza in the Park was founded by the ministries of Vineyard Church in 2008, under the leadership of Senior Pastor, Ken Wilson. (Vineyard Church was founded by Ken and his wife, Nancy, in their home in 1975. It is now one of the city's largest churches.) Colette Szabo joined Vineyard Church after finding out about the church online. She went to a service one Sunday and instantly it felt like family. Shortly after she joined, Wilson told the congregation that he had a vision of ministering to the homeless. He asked if anyone was interested. Szabo said it tugged at her heart and felt that God wanted her to do this. They only started out with four people. Now there are 30 or more people who volunteer. Members of the Northridge Church, located off M-14 in Plymouth, and some students from the University of Michigan help out as well. They have never missed a Friday since their first outing in 2008, and Trainor is determined to keep that record intact.

So, let's just say we may need to order more pizza because, with the increased distance people have to go, they will work up a bigger appetite.



## Friends in Deed fills cracks for 30 years

by Susan Beckett

The staff and volunteers at Friends in Deed do indeed enjoy each other while answering the call to make life better for others. Started as an interfaith outreach 30 years ago, they are well-known as the place to call when furniture is desperately needed. They also fill the safety net cracks, as best they can.

Friends in Deed was formed in 1982 to work collaboratively with agencies and religious congregations to meet the needs of people in crisis. The religious community still supplies a majority of their funding and volunteers. They have an active board of 18 members, more than 20 volunteers who work weekly, and another 50 who pitch in as needed at the office, moving furniture, or elsewhere.

Friday receptionist Rita Nowland started out volunteering 12 years ago by addressing acknowledgment letters to donors, back when the agency was located in downtown Ypsilanti. A retired first-grade teacher, Nowland still enjoys being in the midst of a hubbub.

“I just always think it is the most pleasant place to work. Since I’ve retired, this is the funnest place to go,” Nowland quipped. “You get to know the volunteers and staff really well and they’re really great. Every month or two we have a birthday lunch together and the staff always makes a breakfast/brunch for us around Christmas.”

The furniture program took off in the mid-1990s when Hope Clinic offered the use of their warehouse for furniture storage. Friends in Deed moved into their present location on Ecorse Rd. Five years ago, a spacious building with a warehouse on the premises. Lora Elwart, one of the four staff people,



Sarah Visintainer guides patrons through the Friends in Deed warehouse to select the household items they need.

oversees the warehouse, helping clients find furniture that suits their needs and coordinating the volunteers that move and load the furniture. Two of the regular furniture movers have been volunteering regularly for more than nine years. Some of the movers are participants in the Washtenaw Community College Young Adult Project, a program for cognitively-impaired 18- to 25-year-olds. Under the supervision of teaching assistant Bill Sherd, they get themselves to the warehouse and develop job skills and work experience while helping others.

People who need help getting furniture call Friends in Deed's Help Line and a caseworker helps them develop a list of what they need and puts them on the wait-list. Elwart makes shopping appointments on Friday between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. for people whose items-needed match what is available in the warehouse. A few times each month volunteers do the shopping based on the list, and deliver items to people who

absolutely cannot pick up the items themselves.

“The ones who are really thankful, the moms trying to get something for their kids to sleep on, make it really worthwhile,” said Elwart.

Some request lists are quite elaborate, but Elwart recalled a man who was referred by the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative whose only list item was a mattress of any size. When she informed him that a frame or box spring might not be available, he laughed and said, “I’ve been used to sleeping on a metal slab with a thin mattress. Anything will do.”

“We always need beds and dressers,” said Elwart. “They are the top two things we never get enough of – well, almost never. Dining tables and chairs would be number-three.”

Executive director Sarah Thornburg recalled the one time they were inundated with mattresses. The Campus Inn in Ann Arbor was refurbishing their rooms and had 177 pillow-topped queen beds in good condition to give away. “The Campus Inn doesn't let things wear out,” said Thornburg.

The staff was delighted to take some of the beds, but knew they did not have nearly enough room for them all. A volunteer donated money for a storage unit so they could take them all for the few months it took to give them away. “We were thinking inside the box,” said Thornburg, “and one of our

volunteers got us to think outside the box. People were so thrilled to get those beds. I love our volunteers! I can't say enough about them. So faithful – many for more than 20 years.”

Friends in Deed is always looking for donations of furniture and cars, which donors can use as deductions to their income taxes. Furniture can be picked up, if necessary. Most of the furniture pick-up volunteers are younger men who have regular jobs, so last-minute calls to clean out an apartment are tricky to accommodate. Cars are evaluated and if they can be made reliable are given away free to low-income people who need them.

Thornburg came to Friends in Deed two years ago after working for the Salvation Army in Farmington Hills as a the Director of Caring Ministries and doing casework for six years. Prior to that, she was home raising kids and volunteering with hospice, church and social justice projects for 10 years, and prior to that she worked for NASA.

All her previous experiences – even her work at NASA, which included distilling progress on scientific experiments for presentation at press conferences and in brochures – helped prepare her for her present position. She especially appreciates that this job enables her to fulfill her calling to care for people, and she occasionally gets to do that directly when she fills in on the Help Line for the caseworker.

The lesser-known of Friends in Deed's services include the semi-annual updating and printing of a Resource Guide detailing who in the area provides what services; starting each fall with a “How to Help” seminar to better equip places of worship to assist those who show up at their doors looking for help; and doing social service work for smaller congregations.

In accordance with their mission to fill in the cracks, Friends in Deed will sometimes help with car repairs, uncovered medical expenses, utility shut-offs if the amount owed is in excess of what is available from other sources, and other emergencies not covered by other agencies.

“One guy staying in a motel relied on a bike for transportation and he blew out a tire. We bought him a new tire and a bike lock. We also got an air conditioner for a child with asthma during the very hot summer a couple of years ago,” said Thornburg, citing a couple of examples.

see FURNITURE, page 9



## In defense of foolishness: Ann Arbor's festival culture

by Francesca Lupia  
Groundcover Contributor

Mute, massive, and painstakingly crafted each year from pounds of paper mache, Ann Arbor's puppets speak volumes about the city's culture. The towering creations, manned by teams of colorfully-dressed volunteers and observed by thousands of townies young and old, mark the beginning of each Michigan spring as they march down Main Street in early April's FestiFools Parade. This eagerly-anticipated festival, one of the many events that showcases Ann Arbor's close-knit, creative personality each year, brings out the city's zany side in full, "foolish" force. On the brisk afternoon of April 7, the seventh annual incarnation of the event brought paper-mache likenesses of robots, fairies, clowns, and even Mayor John Hieftje to the Main Street area, and a friendly, festive glee captivated spectators and performers alike.



"I love this event," enthused self-styled "King of Festifools" Al Carter, a long-time Ann Arborite who attended the event in outlandish royal garb. "People come out just to enjoy themselves, laugh, and celebrate the town's spirit."

Even on a perfectly uneventful Sunday afternoon, it's hard not to notice the distinct community culture of downtown Ann Arbor. Street musicians, costumed in grotesque wolf-man masks or bright face paint or more pedestrian flannel shirts and odd tights, offer their tunes to passersby. Vocal student political groups and public art displays are common sights in the Diag or between shops on Main Street, and a wealth of diverse people from every imaginable cultural identity lends the town a tangible air of informed, engaged, and creative collaboration.

But the consciously quirky identity of Ann Arbor is most visible in the festivals and events that serve as landmarks in every townie's calendar. FestiFools, and the accompanying "Fool Moon" lantern parade, provide a whimsical introduction to the fresh energy of springtime.

"Having so many people gathered here is just really exciting," explained Chrissy Amezcua, a registered nurse at the University of Michigan who attended this year's FestiFools with her family. The eccentric artistry and crazy costumes of FestiFools, though, symbolize more than spring fever. The festival "attracts a really diverse group, a wealth of culture," Amezcua noted, and the event's embrace of unconventional modes of

expression provides an inspiring example of the tolerance and mutual support Ann Arbor strives to espouse. "It's good for the soul," smiled spectator Pauline Johnson.

FestiFools spectators, though enthusiastic and engaged in the wacky happenings around them, also eagerly awaited the multitude of town traditions that fill Ann Arbor's summers. Kelly and Chris, a young couple who recently relocated to Ann Arbor, admitted that they "don't go to many festivals during the academic year - we just don't have time." But the pair looked forward to attending Ann Arbor's summer events, which capture the creative spirit of the community through the Summer Festival's nightly concerts and July's internationally-renowned Art Fair.

"Top of the Park [the outdoor concerts held each night on Ingalls Mall] is a good way to spend time with friends and get outside," Chris said. Beyond the sheer entertainment value of the Summer Festival, the couple appreciates the Festival and the Fair for their commitment to supporting community members. "Getting so many people

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Thousands came out for the 7th Annual FestiFools Parade on April 7.ww

downtown is good for local businesses, and it's fun to see people from around the world appreciating artists from the community," Kelly noted. "You also get to meet so many different people, and really feel connected to the community."

Though his informal campaign for the

FestiFools throne demonstrates his enthusiasm for Ann Arbor's festival culture, Al Carter recognizes that not all townies are believers in what he calls "the town spirit of laughter." Due to the crowding and traffic that festivals often create, "long-time residents sometimes

see FOOLS, page 7

# GRILLIN' 2013

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## Fools, festivals and fairs

continued from page 6

try to flee these events," Carter laughed. "But I think it's one of the best parts of living here. You've got the great cinema at the Film Festival (a showcase of short and full-length films that takes place each February), the energy of the Townie Party (an annual kick-off to the Art Fair). Then there's the Art Fair and everything else. We're so fortunate to have this culture, and everyone should get out to enjoy it."

Though Ann Arbor's festivals (and particularly Top of the Park) have been threatened in recent years by limited funding, they've endured the test of time so far. J.S. Schulze, a visual artist who describes himself as an "old-school townie," recalls with fondness the street music of longtime Ann Arbor resident "Shakey Jake" Woods, a guitarist and local personality who died in 2007. Schulze, who is currently homeless,

said that Ann Arbor's culture of charity, community, and creativity has been of immense help to him in earning a living and finding peace.

"I've presented my work at the Clinton Art Fair, played guitar with Shakey Jake at the Hash Bash (an annual day of revelry, activism, and celebration of marijuana use among University of Michigan students), and found a great opportunity in this community," Schulze noted. "We're a caring community, a family, a great town with a great college, and if you need something, all you need to do is ask."

Ann Arbor's festivals, Schulze declared, are a fixture of community life that represent the city's core values despite their crazy costumes and customs; during any festival, showcase, or fair here, he concluded, "you can find food for health, food for thought, and food for the soul."

## St. Francis of Assisi

### PARISH

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**Sunday**  
7:00 a.m. 8:45 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:15 p.m. 5:00 p.m.

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Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

## Cryptoquote

RPXXVUZRWNZPU TFWQG NP

RPXXVUZND, NEWN ZG, NP

VUQFSGNWUQZUA, ZUNZXWRD

WUQ XVNVWT OWTVZUA.

— SPTTP XWD

Hint: T = L

Solutions on page 11

## Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

**All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:**

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcov-

er News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

**If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:**  
**contact@groundcovernews.com**  
**734-972-0926**

Happy Birthday Alex!  
From Maya.

**GROUNDCOVER**  
 Groundcover News needs a 6' x 6' tent for Art Fair. We could also use file cabinet folder frames for our office.

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**Donated car or van**

Please call 734-972-0926 or email  
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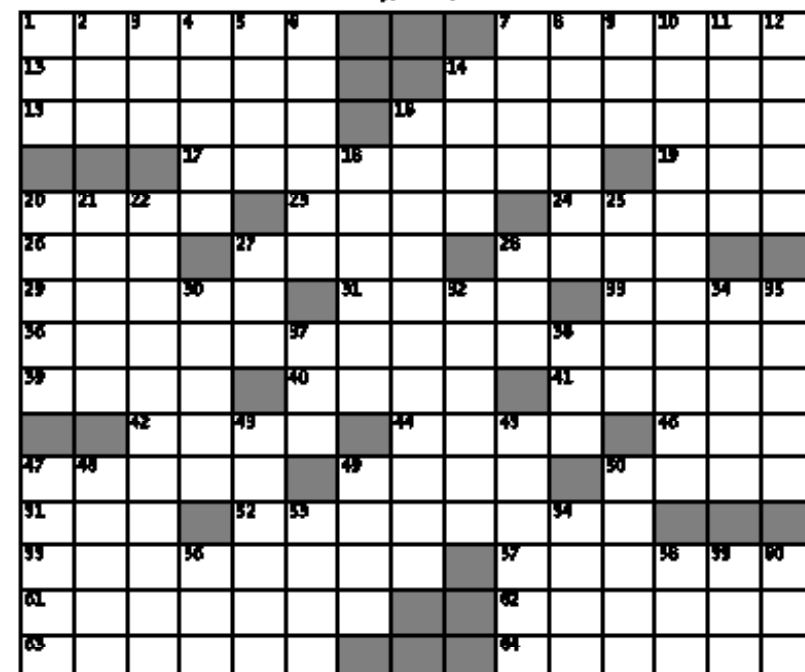
## More on homeless help homeful

Last month, we ran a story written by Mary Ann Trainor about volunteers from MISSION and Camp Take Notice assisting a Vineyard church member to make vital repairs to her home. The article was truncated and the following information was omitted:

The Camp Take Notice volunteers who worked on the repairs were Brian, Seth, Caleb, Tate, Kent, Betsy, Nick, Alonzo, Jim, Glen, Tracey, Pressidy, and Shari.

Sharon (the home-owner), her son Dylan, and Mary Ann Trainor (author of the article and Director of the Vineyard Homeless Ministry) attended the Sunday evening Camp Take Notice meeting on Feb. 10, where they presented a plaque to the group and a donation to MISSION on behalf of the Ann Arbor Vineyard Homeless Ministry.

## Ready, Aim, Fire!



12. Upright  
 14. Comedian Fooz  
 16. Mass transit vehicle  
 18. Hate  
 20. Lathered  
 21. Oblong  
 22. Sensitive mechanism  
 25. Food fish  
 27. How you know (abbr.)  
 28. Noise of pleasure  
 30. Evaluated  
 32. Publisher  
 34. Manila Pact (abbr.)  
 35. Pointer  
 37. Timezone (abbr.)  
 38. British lexicon (abbr.)

43. Classified  
 45. Shoves  
 47. Chewes  
 48. Went again  
 49. Inche  
 50. Asian country  
 53. Polynesian goddess  
 54. Musician Nobles  
 56. Australian actor Danville  
 58. School in Trinidad (abbr.)  
 59. Pronoun  
 60. Swedish golfer Fredrik Andersson

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

## Schooled about homelessness at Groundcover



by Keagan Irrer  
Groundcover Contributor

I've never had to worry about where my next meal was coming from, or where I was going to sleep tomorrow night. I've always been well taken care of throughout my life, with a healthy, stable home environment and a free college education.

But when I started working with Groundcover, I was suddenly surrounded by people who had none of these things. I heard stories about living under bridges, about being trapped outside in the rain, and being unable to sleep for being swarmed by mosquitoes. People told me such things casually, as though they were completely normal and an expected part of life – and for them, they were. But for me, they were beyond imagining.

I began to feel sheltered, guilty about my privileged status. For these people, just getting their basic needs taken care of required tremendous effort on their part, and for me it was virtually effortless. The physical and psychological toll was clearly immense; I saw firsthand the way homelessness conspired to break people's minds, bodies, and souls. I wanted to help them in any way I could.

But I quickly learned that the first rule of helping the homeless is that you can only do so much. You can train them, give them a stack of papers, and tell them to go out and sell as many as they

can, but it's on them to actually do it, and to spend their income wisely. You can only help them to help themselves; a hand up, not a handout.

I also learned how little difference there really was between myself and the homeless. After all, that guy on the corner begging for something to eat is a person too, just maybe he doesn't have access to a shower and hasn't been able to afford new clothes in a while. I learned that being born into the right family can matter a lot, or how you can be horribly punished for one or two bad decisions. Maybe you were unlucky enough to get a mental illness and now nobody will employ you because of it. Poor choices are a big factor in homelessness, but so is luck.

One of the most difficult and disturbing things I learned was how much our society tries to sweep homelessness under the rug. We try to hide it away, make laws against panhandling and spending the night on the streets; we put them in jail, or in the hospital, or in a temporary shelter. As long as we can't see the problem, it's not really there – out of sight, out of mind.

But it is there, no matter how hard we try to hide it, and it's an expensive problem. The chronically homeless people of the United States cost some \$11 billion a year in public funds; according to one estimate, the cost to society per homeless individual is \$41,000 a year. Jails, hospitals, and outreach programs all cost a lot of money.

Groundcover isn't a perfect solution to the titanic problem of homelessness. It's not going to clean up the streets of Ann Arbor, but it can help. It provides guaranteed employment to those who

want it and are willing to abide by a basic code of conduct, and a community of sorts that homeless people can rally around. One of the best things about it that I've seen is the sense of pride, accomplishment, and purpose that it gives to the people it employs, both vendors and volunteers. It's a great stepping stone for numerous homeless who want to improve their lives.

My time at Groundcover has been instructive and rewarding. It's difficult to see the problem of homelessness up close and firsthand, but we can't hope to solve this problem unless we confront it, head-on, like Groundcover does.

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Thursday, June 20, 2013  
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 7:00-8:00 pm - Program

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church  
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Special Guest Speaker: Jan Little  
 Executive Director - Michigan Ability Partners

Presentation of the 1st Annual Barbara Wykes Award

For more information visit **RAAH.org**



## Election reflection finale: a humorous look at why Romney lost

by **Martin Stolzenberg**  
Groundcover Contributor

Part 3 of a three-part series—*The Finale*

In Part 1 of this series, the nomination process was dissected. Part 2 described a series of Republican blunders wrought by the unwise, “full-speed-ahead and damn-the-consequences” attitude the party adopted. In Part 3, we will, at long last, examine the election’s results and their likely long-term outcome.

Mitt Romney’s laundry list of gaffes and goof-ups grew and Republican comments became more desperate as the Governor and his staff scrambled to gain traction. By mid-autumn, no claim was too outrageous. Early in the campaign, Neil Newhouse, Governor Romney’s chief political pollster, declared, “We are not going to let the fact-checkers dictate what we say in the campaign.” And he was ultimately correct: the sensationalized and desperate final months of the campaign formed a season that threw logic and facts under the wheels of Romney’s campaign bus. The Republicans seemed to hold the strings to a major Pinocchio franchise, and their blind desire to gain control created a list of lies longer than the puppet’s nose.

Puppet theatre’s all well-and-good for family entertainment, but as demonstrated last November, it’s not a great party platform. The Republican Party would have benefited if they had simply “let their consciences be their guides.” A friendly Jiminy Cricket might have prevented Governor Romney’s biggest blooper: the statement that Chrysler, which the government had bailed out a few years ago, “was... planning to close Ohio factories and ship American jobs to China.” Furthermore, he said, “GM would have been better served if allowed to go through an ordinary bankruptcy instead of taking a government handout.”

These outrageous comments even drew the ire of automotive executives, a group not usually eager to embrace the Democrats. CEOs of Chrysler and GM were quick to castigate the Governor for his inaccurate remarks. Such a large-scale reaction from major corporations was unheard of in the history of American politics. Once more, Governor Romney had tripped over both his own feet – or rather, over the long Pinocchio nose constructed from his own half-truths.

It’s important to keep in mind that the Obama campaign was no saintly endeavor. The Democrats certainly exaggerated and twisted some of their claims about Governor Romney.

But their actions were typical of what usually happens in presidential campaigns – garden-variety stuff, compared with the cartoonish, comical drivel Republicans threw in the faces of the American public. The presidential race remained tight after the President’s disastrous first debate performance, but the odds-makers and key pollsters all predicted President Obama would still win – and not merely by a nose.

As it turned out, a natural disaster turned the rising tide of political competition. After Hurricane Sandy battered the East Coast, the stout Governor Christie of New Jersey, a conservative Republican who had harshly criticized the President in the past, literally embraced President Obama in a bear hug that would have killed an ordinary man. Christie enthused, “The administration has done a wonderful job in coming to the aid of New Jersey in our terrible crisis.” It is unlikely now that this formerly beloved Republican will even be considered for a job as Secretary of the Sewers by his party.

So what became of this presidential puppet show? As we know, the election itself was anti-climatic, with President Obama winning handily. But the campaign itself is much more interesting, for the underlying reason Governor Romney lost was the fact that he ran one of the worst campaigns imaginable. It was a failure of historic proportions, crammed with propaganda and lies, akin to a campaign Attila the Hun would have conducted if he had run for election in old Mongolia. Governor Romney would have performed better if he just had kept mum the whole campaign, claiming chronic laryngitis.

But unlike Pinocchio’s ever-growing nose, a presidential campaign’s success or failure isn’t built from lies alone. President Obama’s secret weapon laid in the well-hidden workers he used to carry out his get-out-the-vote strategy. Operatives in key battleground states, organized during the 2008 election, methodically recruited volunteers to encourage the faithful to vote in the 2012 election.

As a result, Democratic voters came out in droves and helped sweep eight of nine swing states in 2012, whiffing only in North Carolina. It was so bad that Republicans lost Michigan, where Governor Romney grew up, and Massachusetts, where he governed. The ticket also lost the battleground state of Wisconsin, the birthplace and home of Representative (and vice-presidential candidate) Paul Ryan, a real-life demonstration of the axiom “Familiarity breeds contempt.”



But Romney’s campaign wasn’t all bad: in retrospect, it seems the best asset the Governor had going for him was his looks. Like it or not, it’s hard to deny that Mitt Romney is very handsome. His wife, Ann, is beautiful and gracious, and the photogenic family is rounded out by five sons who could pass for movie stars and eighteen great-looking grandkids. Of course, the Obamas aren’t unlucky in the looks department (Michelle is lovely, and the girls, Sasha and Malia, are adorable), but the twenty-five ravishing Romneys swamp them by sheer numbers. However, in the end families don’t decide presidential campaigns – candidates do. And as Mitt Romney figured out the hard way, smooth talk and a pretty face aren’t worth much at the ballot box.

He didn’t take the news well, either: as we learned after President Obama was declared victor, Governor Romney was flabbergasted at his loss. His key advisors had told him all along that he would be the next president. His polls all showed success.

But after running such a ridiculous farce of a campaign, how could he not have expected this outcome?

Easy. He and his confidants stuck with their old, yellowed playbook and only followed dated polls (including Gallup, Rasmussen, and their own private polls) that examined samples loaded unevenly with Republican respondents.

Indeed, history buffs might just recall an earlier, similar debacle. The Literary Digest, a popular monthly magazine of the 1930s, confidently proclaimed that Republican Alf Landon would easily beat President Roosevelt in the 1936 election. After all, they had conducted a massive voter straw poll of over 10 million to back up their claim. But the respondents were drawn from the magazine’s own readers (who, of course, were mostly staunch Republicans) as well as lists of telephone and car owners (which included only the most affluent Americans during this economically

distressed period). In reality, Landon only carried the states of Maine and Vermont, causing political pundits of the time to alter the old slogan, “As goes Maine, so goes the country” to “As goes Maine, so goes Vermont.” Shortly after the President’s reelection, The Literary Digest went out of business. And while the Republican party has yet to declare its own demise, Romney’s humiliating defeat dealt a serious blow to his party’s morale and credibility.

In a sort of revisionist swan song, Governor Romney spoke to the faithful few who hadn’t shied away from his tarnished name a week after the election. Unlike his supporters, Romney didn’t blame his loss on Hurricane Sandy. In true Romney style, he used an excuse more damaging to his own reputation than the devastating super-storm. He carped that President Obama had won by “gifting” special interests groups, giving them trinkets like contraceptives for young women, deportation forgiveness for young illegal immigrants, free medical care for moderate income people, tuition breaks for college students, and marriage rights for gays. Until the very end, Mitt Romney’s campaign was pathetic and uninspiring, but this refusal to recognize his own weaknesses (and to take into account the very real needs of ordinary Americans) truly put the icing on the burnt, bitter, and completely inedible election cake.

So behind the jigsaw puzzle of lies, propaganda, and political ignorance, what does the 2012 election truly reveal? It showcases a party plagued by division, irrationality, and a shifty relationship with the truth, and a candidate utterly unsuited for national office. The party of Abraham Lincoln, who famously “could not tell a lie,” has become the party of Pinocchio, and until the Republicans fix the corruption and ineffectiveness that confines their party, they may be forced by the demands of the American people to keep their “mitts” out of national politics.

## Book Review: Slow Democracy bridges divides

*SLOW DEMOCRACY: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back Home*

by *Susan Clark and Woden Teachout*  
c. 2012 by *Chelsea Green Publishing*

Review by **David KE Dodge**

Early in this book, the authors note that the word “Slow,” followed by a second word (such as “Food” or “Money”), constitutes the names of different social movements spawned over the last 27 years to address people’s increasing sense of alienation from the social and political systems they depend on. The authors cite two trends which are at least partly responsible for that divorce: privatization of formerly public services, and centralization of policy making, from local communities to the states and the federal government.

The archetype of such movements is the “Slow Food Movement”, which was conceived in Rome in 1986 as protestors at a just-opened McDonald’s restaurant chanted (presumably in Italian), “We don’t want fast food! We want slow food!” The title of the book, *Slow Democracy*, is the brainchild of Susan Clark. While listening to an audio recording of Michael Pollan’s bestselling book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, it occurred to her that her own involvement in community development bore similarity to the efforts of the Slow Food Movement – hence the term “Slow Democracy.”

To quote a passage from the introduction: “Slow democracy offers broad principles, tools, and vocabulary that citizens can use to create a healthy local democracy. And slow democracy is local – happening in the communities and towns that we all live in, whose processes we can be part of.”

The authors go on to outline three key elements of democratic decision-making:

**Inclusion** – insuring broad, diverse public participation

**Deliberation** – defining problems and weighing solutions through a public process based on sound information and respectful relationships

**Power** – defining a clear connection between citizen participation, public decisions and action.

The actual details of how slow democracy works vary greatly,



## “Shape Ypsilanti”: master planning underway

by **Leone Gerstein**  
Groundcover Contributor

Since January, residents of the City of Ypsilanti have been working on a new Master Plan, the overarching plan that determines land use and zoning definitions and practices. This plan will affect the quality of life in the city for years to come. (The last master plan was drawn up during the Clinton presidency).

How fortunate that this time Ypsilanti received a HUD Sustainability grant for master planning! This made possible three democratic, interactive all-day workshops, called charrettes. A charrette is a forum for residents to present a practical vision for their

immediate neighborhood and the entire city and benefit from the responses of city officials and city planner. The goal, according to the Shape Ypsi website, is to create a master plan “grounded in real challenges and opportunities facing the City,” not some ideal delivered from on high, to be chipped away at later on. The planning process kicked off with community marches through the city as people took note of assets and eyesores in various neighborhoods.

Topics discussed in the charrettes included transportation, availability of services, such as stores and parks,

according to the nature of the issues being addressed, the size of the community grappling with them, the range of interests affected by the policies under consideration, and other factors. But taking the time to include a broad spectrum of the citizenry in planned deliberation can render a number of benefits to the community. For example, the decisions made are better informed – more aspects are considered, and the community will be more likely to back the decisions – fewer protests, fewer lawsuits.

But benefits go beyond those to be directly anticipated. Many of the participants in the processes of slow democracy have become more aware, active, and capable of contributing to other community efforts and even have impact on regional or national levels.

The authors contrast “fast democracy” and “slow democracy.” Increasingly, what U.S. Americans “enjoy” as their participation in government is “fast democracy” – perhaps 20 minutes spent every two years in a polling booth, selecting from a slate of adversarial choices those candidates with whom the voter is most

comfortable, however vague the actual, necessary information. Participants in “slow democracy,” in contrast, spend hours in getting to know and respect strangers who, though at first blush may seem adversaries, in fact have feelings, values, and interests which, if not identical, are often at least overlapping, and to the extent not overlapping, may be found to be complementary, so that cooperation and compromise can be found beneficial to all.

The methodologies implied by the term “slow democracy” comprise a burgeoning field. Some cities have institutionalized such methodologies as a standard resource for appointing city government staff who specialize in instituting programs that are broadly representative group of the citizenry. My next investigation prompted by this book is to find out whether Ann Arbor has an established office for slow democracy facilitation. If not, Ann Arbor is certainly a good candidate for such a step.

This work is a vital survey of an approach to self-government that is of critical importance to citizen control of our power institutions. Read it.

*Request Slow Democracy through the Ann Arbor Public Library Interlibrary Loan system, or contact your favorite locally-owned bookstore to order a copy.*



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Communication leads  
to community, that is, to  
understanding, intimacy  
and mutual valuing.  
– Rollo May

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## Peanutty stir fry with broiled tofu

by Lisa Sonnenburg  
Groundcover Contributor

### Ingredients\*:

1 cup uncooked brown rice

### Broiled Tofu:

1 cake extra-firm tofu

2 tsp olive or other vegetable oil

2 T soy sauce

Dash of hot pepper sauce

½ tsp sesame oil

### Vegetables:

1 T olive oil

½ onion, sliced

½ each of green, red and yellow bell peppers

1 cup sliced mushrooms

### Sauce:

1/3 cup natural smooth peanut butter

1/2 T brown sugar

2 T lemon juice

1/3 cup salsa

¼ tsp ground cumin

### Preparation:

Bring two cups of water to a boil. Add 1 cup rice and simmer covered for 40-45 minutes.

Meanwhile, drain tofu and cut into ½-inch slices. Place paper towel on a cutting board or other flat surface. Lay tofu flat on paper towel, cover with more paper towel and place a heavy object (book, cast iron pan) on top to squeeze excess water out of tofu. Leave for 15 minutes.

While rice is cooking and tofu is drying, chop vegetables and prepare sauce.

For sauce, simply mix all sauce ingredients in a bowl until well blended.

Preheat broiler on oven (toaster ovens work very well for this).

Combine olive oil, soy sauce, hot sauce and sesame oil in pan and place tofu in pan. Make sure tofu is covered by the mixture on both sides.

Broil tofu for 5 minutes. Turn off broiler and leave until needed.

Heat wok or frying pan on medium-high heat and add oil.

Add onion and stir fry for 1 minute.

Add mushrooms and stir fry for 1 minute.

Add peppers and stir fry for 1 minute.

Add peanut sauce and stir fry until sauce is warmed and coats all the vegetables.

To serve, put ½ cup of rice in bowls, topped with vegetables and finally tofu.

Enjoy!

**Serves 4.**

\* Works well with any other vegetables – broccoli, carrots, bok choy, etc. Chicken can be substituted for the tofu.



# Case Clothed

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Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter - Cy Klone © 2013

**Panel 1:** You know, sometimes you're as bad as a human teen.

**Panel 2:** What do you mean? I'm way cooler and more coordinated than the average human teen.

**Panel 3:** You still have the same crazy mood swings.

**Panel 4:** Your words make me feel both sad and angry. What's your point?

**Panel 5:** Well, let's see: Sometimes you ignore me. Sometimes you follow me around like a shadow. Sometimes you randomly show affection then suddenly run off to be alone. Later, you attack me or start a fight.

**Panel 6:** My point exactly. And then there are those times when you revert to being a little kitten and curl up next to me so I'll groom you.

**Panel 7:** Hey, at least I let you do my hair. That's more than the average teen's mother gets to do.

**Panel 1:** I like to keep my options open.

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